



# Coping with diabetes mellitus in adolescence

**Noor Al-Modihesh**  
**Consultant Child & Adolescents**  
**Psychiatry**



## Lecture outline

- › Difficulties among adolescent with DM type 1
- › Sources of stressors for them.
- › Types of coping.
- › How to help.



- › Adolescence can be a difficult period of life. The need to become more independent, to create an identity and to adopt a new lifestyle can influence the way that adolescents with diabetes cope with their disease
- › The freedom to make one's own choices about lifestyle is seen as important in this age group. Taking increasing responsibility for diabetes self-care is part of the process



## Psychosocial Factors and Diabetes

- › Stress sometimes changes a latent case of diabetes into an active one.
- › Psychological factors may precipitate the onset of diabetes and influence the timing of symptoms presentation
- › It has been established that there is an excess of life events in the few months preceding the onset of the condition particularly in older children & adolescents.
- › Psychological dysfunction may cause reoccurrence of acute diabetic episode specially in adolescents.
- › Life experience and emotional factors can have an important bearing on the course of diabetes.




**Psychological morbidity appears to be from 10 – 30 % with chronic illnesses.**

**Diabetes mellitus is co-morbid with :**

- ❖ Depression.
- ❖ Anxiety disorders.

Other behavioral problems :





## Other co-morbid behavioral & psychological problems:

- Anger
- Adjustment disorders
- Social withdrawal
- Acute organic brain syndrome
- Low self esteem
- Behavioral problems
- Eating disorders



## Difficulties that they face

- ✓ Diet restriction.
- ✓ Frequent blood testing & injections.
- ✓ Dependency on family.
- ✓ Isolation from peers.
- ✓ Physical limitations.
- ✓ Parents can't differentiate bet. Common anxiety Sx of temperament **AND** hypoglycemia.





## What factors affect types of adjustment ?

- › Personal strength & interpersonal skills.
- › Child temperament
- › Family influences on coping
- › Peer group influences on coping
- › Feelings and attitudes about how they cope
- › Quality of life and how this affected coping
- › Personal meaning of illness
- › Fear for the future and how this affected coping.



## Sources of stress in DM :

- › The illness it self.
- › Illness-specific stressor such as :
  - ❖ Disease-related pain.
  - ❖ Medical procedures.
  - ❖ Stress related to admission
  - ❖ Extreme self control ( diet)



There are negative impact of every day stressors on health , immune and circulatory system



## Other effects :

- › Children & adolescents with diabetes show an increased rate of learning problems.
- › Cognitive impairment on intelligence scales have been noticed.
- › School absence.
- › The majority of school personnel has inadequate understanding of diabetes and its management.



Coping is :

The process of managing stressors (internal and external )

Coping of adolescents with chronic illness focus on coping with illness it self





## The types of coping in adolescents :

- › Additive ( main ) effect model which focus on well-being regardless amount of stress.
- › Interactive model : coping moderates the impact of stressor to varying degree depends on severity of stressor.



## How to help :

- › Parent support.
- › Cognitive coping ( understand how the insulin help to grow stronger )
- › Behavioral coping ( minimize the experience of being deprived from popular food ..)
- › Coping with Sx of Depression.





## Psychosocial Aspects of Management

- › Most of youngsters with diabetes and their families will cope well with the social and psychological stresses imposed by the illness.
- › Education
- › When to refer the patient to a child and adolescent psychiatrist?
- › School counseling
- › Individual psychotherapy
- › Family counseling
- › Managing psychiatric disorders